

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP
FIRE-RESCUE DEPARTMENT PLANNING
Thursday, November 21, 2002 – 2:10 P.M. to 4:50 P.M.
Beach Community Center
3351 N.E. 33 Avenue

Present: Mayor Naugle
Commissioners Hutchinson, Katz (2:25 p.m.), Smith, and Moore

Also Present: City Attorney, City Manager and City Clerk

Welcome and Overview – Fire Chief Otis Latin Sr.

Chief Latin thanked the Commission and reminded them that any questions would be addressed at the end of the presentations.

Chief Latin pointed out that in October 1999 a total Emergency Medical Services operation was implemented, putting paramedics on all of the engine companies, and on 10 rescue units. Sixty-one firefighters were hired and trained in 1999, and an additional 42 were hired in 2000 due to the “drop” program. Other improvements in 1999 were:

- A new computer-aided dispatch system
- 12 new dispatchers were trained within the year to use the new system
- New employee staffing program
- EMS billing and collection system – brings in \$3.5 million per year in revenues
- Rescue assessment program – brings in \$6 million per year in revenues
- Contracts to provide Wilton Manors and Lazy Lakes Fire Rescue services

Chief Latin then presented statistics to demonstrate changes over the past five years:

- Approximately 32,000 incidents in 1996; 38,000 in 2001,
- 310 employees in 1996; 412 in 2001, – annexation may increase to 490
- 23 Emergency units in 1996, 28 in 2002
- 33 Square mile service area in 1996, 43 square miles in 2002
- Approximately 152, 000 population served in 1996, 178,000 in 2002
- 1996 budget: \$27 million, 2002 budget: \$40 million

Chief Latin then explained the Fire Department’s hiring goals. For Hispanics, the goal had been 5.1% of the uniformed Firefighters; in 2002 the total had reached 13.5%. The goal for female Firefighters had been 6.2%; in 2002 the total was 8.5%. A goal of 11.3% had been set for black Firefighters; in 2002 the total was 7.9%.

Chief Latin stated that from 1997 to 2002, 192 out of 378 current Firefighter positions had been filled. Between 1997 and 2002, 114 promotions were given out of 171 positions. He also noted the 97% satisfaction rate with the Fire Protection Services, and a 96% satisfaction rate with the

EMS services. The department was very proud of what had been accomplished and looked forward to the future.

Operations Presentation – Deputy Chief Keith Allen

Chief Allen outlined current issues affecting fire station operations:

- Geographical location
- Living space for staff diversification—specifically female staff
- Space for apparatus and equipment
- Life safety requirements
- Storage space for training equipment and gear
- Parking
- ADA and other regulatory compliance
- Community needs

Chief Allen noted the following developments that will also have an impact on operations. New, specialized equipment being acquired e.g., HazMat and technical rescue, will require increased storage space. Staffing changes are affecting dorm and restroom needs. Surge capacity: in the event of a disaster, police personnel will use fire stations as bases. In the future, fire stations could offer public building functionality and serve as:

- Election facilities
- Police sub-stations
- Meeting rooms for code enforcement, building inspections

Administration Presentation – Acting Deputy Chief Dennis Sheehan

Chief Sheehan described the administrative division, which has five areas of operation:

- EMS
- Fire Training and special operations
- Fire prevention and inspections
- Support services
- Office of Financial Management

Commissioner Moore left the meeting at 2:30 p.m. and returned at 2:37 p.m.

Chief Sheehan then explained each division in more detail:

EMS

- Medical Director coordination
- Medical recertification—personnel certified until December 1, 2004
- Transport billing and collections
- BLS and ALS Quality Improvement and Assurances
- Infectious Diseases Program
- Special service details—large community events
- Research and new technology
- State regulations and Inspections

Training Bureau

- All training needs; EMS, fire suppression, special operations
- Citizens Emergency Response Team training
- Recruitment
- Promotional testing
- Development of improved methods and techniques

Prevention / Inspection

- Residential, High-Rise Sprinkler Program
- Plans review
- Ongoing community inspections
- Arson investigation
- Public education

Support Services

- Fleet management
- Fire Station maintenance and repair
- External contracts—vendors for stretchers, oxygen, etc.
- Equipment procurement, maintenance, and repair
- Department supplies

Office of Financial Management

- Payroll
- Personnel
- Clerical staff

Chief Sheehan presented highlights of the technological progress of the last few years:

- Telestaff: electronic staffing / scheduling software
- SunPro: fire records management system

- CAD: new Windows-based system
- Communications: alerting systems
- CAD Analyst / ADAM: identifies response performance
- Traffic pre-emption: control traffic signals during emergencies for safety
- Computer technology network

Emergency Management Presentation – Deputy Chief Rhoda Kerr

Chief Kerr explained the Nunn-Luger-Domenici Weapons of Mass Destruction Domestic Preparedness Program (NLD WMD DP):

- 4 startup meetings—over 1600 hours of education and instruction
- 12 Training opportunities
- 235 contacts made—5,000 hours of training
- 4 residential training programs
 - 38 Technical level personnel
 - 1200 training hours
- 3 Exercises
 - Chemical Weapons Tabletop Exercise: January 23, 2003
 - Biological Weapons Tabletop Exercise: June 5, 2003
 - Chemical Weapons Tabletop Exercise: December 8, 2003
- Equipment Program Plan and Budget
- Integration of GIS—domestic preparedness and emergency management

Chief Kerr then described the newly implemented Metropolitan Medical Response system (MMRS), which defines how to manage the human consequences of an event:

- Execution of a contract to develop the MMRS
- Project Officer
- MMRS Development Plan
 - Assessment of statutes, regulations, and ordinances
 - Creation of Development Team
- MMRS Pharmaceutical Plan
- Development team and subcommittees within areas of expertise
 - Training, education, and exercises
 - Hazardous Materials and radiation safety
 - Pharmaceuticals and medical services
- Monthly meeting every third Thursday
- Network with other MMRS cities on local/regional and national level
- Integrating plans and equipment procurement with State and Federal grants and programs

The Fire Department has begun development of the Emergency Management and Domestic Preparedness project:

- Developing bureau direction and staff acquisition
- Conducting research on other funding sources—FEMA Trust Fund, Federal monies, private grants
- Monitoring expert resources for updates and status
- Strong participation in:
 - Governor's Regional Domestic Security Task Force
 - Broward Terrorism Advisory Committee
 - Broward Emergency Coordinating Council
 - Local Emergency Planning Council
- Work with public and private partners developing agreements to enable disaster recovery plans and assistance
- Planning process for design of permanent City Emergency Operations Center (EOC)—see new Multi-facility

EMS, Apparatus and Department Funding Needs, Options, Closing Remarks – Fire Chief Otis J. Latin Sr.

Chief Latin outlined three areas of long and short-term planning needs: EMS, Fire Stations, and apparatus.

Specific EMS capital needs included:

- Pen-base computer medical reporting system—14 additional units needed
- Cardiac monitors / defibrillator
- Medical stretchers

Commissioner Moore left the meeting at 2:55 p.m. and returned at 3:01 p.m.

The pen-base reporting system would enable patient info to be entered and downloaded or printed as needed. It would also aid medical collections. Commissioner Hutchinson asked Chief Latin if the Fire Department currently possessed any Pen systems. Chief Latin stated that some were presently being field-tested. He also clarified that a total of 28 were needed. Commissioner Smith expressed concern because the Police Department had one Pen-base system that had failed.

Chief Latin noted that the defibrillators were state of the art and very desirable and the stretchers currently in use are outdated, so these were important purchases as well. The grand total projection for EMS capital purchases was \$869,130.00.

Chief Latin then described the scheduled replacement plan for fire-rescue apparatus through 2009.

- 2003/2004
 - 5 Engines, 1 Quint, 1 Fireboat, 1 HazMat Trailer
 - Total cost: \$3.536 Million
- 2005/2006
 - 1 Crash Truck paid for by Airport funding
- 2006/2007
 - 2 Engines
 - 1 Quint
 - 1 HazMat Tractor
 - Total cost: \$1.740 Million
- 2007/2008
 - 3 Engines
 - 1 Support Vehicle
 - Total cost: \$1.737 Million
- 2008/2009
 - 2 Engines
 - 1 Quint
 - Total cost: \$1.7 Million

Chief Latin pointed out that since there was currently only one fireboat and one airport crash truck, the existing equipment would be kept when new units were purchased to maintain backups for each. The command vehicles are currently scheduled for replacement every five years. The engines and quints currently have no set replacement schedule, but it is critical that four engines and one quint be replaced by 2003-2004. The fleet manager had developed a program for replacement that includes auctioning four reserve engines and one reserve quint right away and purchasing new units.

Chief Latin indicated that all replacement cost estimates were “on the low side.” The costs could range from \$9 to \$11.5 million.

Chief Latin presented the refurbishment schedule for the fire stations.

- No. 2 - Built in 1947
 - Currently under construction
- No. 3 – Built in 1984
 - Due in 2024
- No. 8 – Built in 1927

- Currently under construction
- No. 13 – Built in 1971
 - Due in 2011
- No. 16 – NA – Wilton Manors
- No. 29 – Built in 1958
 - In planning stages
- No. 35 – Built in 1966
 - Due in 2006
- No. 46 – Built in 1963
 - Due in 2003
- No. 47 – Built in 1963
 - In planning stages
- No. 49 – Built in 1965
 - Due in 2005
- No. 53 – Built in 1976
 - Currently being finalized
- No. 54 – Built in 1970
 - Due in 2010/Overdue
- No. 88 – Built in 1984
 - Currently being finalized

Chief Latin stated that he could show how moving the stations would affect response times. He felt that Station No. 29 was in most need of replacement. Station No. 35 is in need of more parking, and Nos. 46 and 47 need to be torn down, not just refurbished, as the living conditions were very bad.

The new station No. 2 will hopefully open in February 2003. The new fire-rescue multi-facility at the airport will house stations 53 and 88, the training division, an emergency operations center and a hazardous materials team. The cost for this facility would total between \$2.6 and 3 million. Mayor Naugle asked if most of these costs would be borne by the airport; Chief Latin replied that the airport portion of the funding was only approximately \$1.2 million.

Chief Latin described two location proposals—Plan A and Plan B, and stated he recommended Plan A.

Plan A:

- New Station 2 and administration
- New Airport Station 53/88 EOC, HazMat and Training
- New Station 29
- New Station near South Andrews Avenue and 17th Street

Plan B:

- New Station 2 and Administration
- New Airport Station 53/88 EOC, HazMat and Training
- New Station 29
- New Station in Rio Vista area

Chief Latin then explained the plans for new stations:

Station 29:

- Relocation of site – undetermined
- Approximate square footage – 6,500
- Approximate cost - \$1,800,000
- Potential revenue from sale of current facility - \$675,000
- Funding needed - \$1,800,000

Station 47:

- On current site
 - 6,500 square feet
 - Estimated cost for construction - \$1,300,000
- New Park site with Community Center
 - 11,000 square feet
 - Estimated cost for construction - \$2,200,000
- Funding needed - \$1,300,000 - \$2,200,000

Mayor Naugle asked if a plan to move station 47 farther west had been considered. Chief Latin had considered moving it west to Davie Boulevard, but in his estimation the coverage would be better if the station were kept where it is. There would also be a problem finding land farther west.

New Rio Vista Station:

- Approximate size – 6,500 square feet
- Estimated cost for construction - \$1,300,000
- Estimated cost for land - \$500,000
- Funding needed - \$1,800,000

New Stations due to Annexation:

- Western Station for Central Broward
- Approximate size – 8,000 square feet
- Estimated cost for construction - \$1,600,000

- Estimated cost for land - \$500,000
- Funding needed - \$2,100,000

Chief Latin outlined funding needs for the next eight years. Costs ranged from approximately \$28,000,000 to an optimum \$37,000,000. He explained sources of funding and invited discussion:

- General Obligation Bond (GO)
- Revenue Bond Pledge
 - Utilization of a Fire Assessment Fee for revenue
- Sun Trust Loan for all EMS-related capital purchases– 5 year short term

Question and Answer Session, Discussion

Mayor Naugle described the 1986 Bond issue that the City was currently paying off. He asked what kind of capital for building needs would be brought in if the debt service were kept the same.

Boe Cole, City Treasurer, noted that the City's debt was about to go down. Depending on what the Commission wanted to do in terms of fire and police expenditures, current financing would be reviewed and a financing plan would be developed. A major, long-term bond issue was not a desirable solution for short-term replacements.

Mayor Naugle felt it made sense to not increase debt service. Perhaps the greatest needs could be phased in first. Mr. Cole noted the savings being achieved through refinancing bonds. Mayor Naugle noted that he was more comfortable incurring debt for a building that would last 40 or 50 years.

Commissioner Hutchinson discussed the fire assessment fee, which she felt was low. She wanted to be sure the apparatus was not left out of the plan. She suggested bringing this issue back at the second meeting in January to discuss the funding options then. The City Manager agreed with this idea. Mayor Naugle mentioned that Commissioner Smith wanted consideration of precincts. Commissioner Smith asked how much could be raised on the revenue bond on the fire fee; Mr. Cole estimated \$6.6 million, and noted that it was being used to fund the Fire Department. Mayor Naugle asked how much the fee could be raised at the next budget hearing. Mr. Cole felt \$30 million dollars could be raised.

Chief Latin expressed concern over raising the fee. Commissioner Katz wanted Chief Latin to prioritize expenditures for each year. Chief Latin stated that EMS, stations, and apparatus were the priorities. Commissioner Smith asked how often the crash truck is used, and if a replacement

were really needed. Chief Latin noted that the airport was providing the funds for the crash truck. Commissioner Smith stated that using more appropriate vehicles to respond to certain calls would be more efficient. Chief Latin noted that training of dispatchers and call-takers was needed for better management of dispatching and call-prioritization.

Commissioner Smith noted that 75% of calls were for EMS, so it made sense to send out different types of vehicles. He wondered if regionalization could be achieved with the county since super-special equipment was not often used. Chief Latin noted that Fort Lauderdale's HazMat team responds regionally. He also indicated that it may be possible to get additional funding for the HazMat team.

Commissioner Hutchinson expressed concern that Fort Lauderdale would not get much in return for their expenditures. She felt the City was very fortunate to have the specialized services. She was also concerned that the stations were not large enough. She felt that adding only 400 square feet to the new stations was inadequate considering the inevitable annexation of surrounding areas. She cited the City of Sunrise, where new stations were 15,000 to 23,000 square feet. She felt more consideration should be given to needs in the future when equipment will get larger and more personnel would be employed.

Commissioner Hutchinson did not want the Commission to "nitpick" Chief Latin's priorities. The reserve equipment should be removed from service, and square footage should be upgraded on some of the stations. She also felt that the Fire Department was not getting its fair share of grants, and the City Manager should be directed to help them get more grant money. Mayor Naugle stated that the direction was given.

The City Manager mentioned that he was interviewing a grant writer tomorrow. He stated that grants had been pursued, but the City had not been very successful. Chief Kerr stated that the MMRS grant was \$4400,000 the first year, with a possible additional \$200,000 the second year. She also mentioned a workshop on Homeland Security grant money that would make millions of dollars available for the Police and Fire Departments. Mayor Naugle noted that \$3.8 billion had been set aside by the federal government for police and fire departments.

Commissioner Katz asked Mr. Cole if the fire assessment fee must be used for the Fire Department only. Mr. Cole confirmed this. Commissioner Katz felt the City needed to look at funding sources, and perhaps consider a fire/public safety bond because the police have needs too.

Mr. Johnson stated that a total plan should be presented in January, including return on current assets and phasing priorities, not just bonding. He felt there was no way to serve all needs and keep debt service level. Almost \$100 million dollars had been requested by the Police and Fire Departments. He suggested a methodology to provide funds by dividing needs into manageable

chunks, and the formulation of a backup plan with alternate means. He suggested this be done no later than January.

Commissioner Katz felt that the stations were the most important issue right now. The equipment was the second priority. The Commission needed to balance how much the City can ask the citizenry to give, how much they can tax, and how much they can buy. Chief Latin stated that his list was already prioritized and contained no “fluff.”

Commissioner Moore agreed that there should be a meeting to specifically address public safety topics. He liked the idea of bonding for capital projects. He agreed with Commissioner Hutchinson’s support for the Fire Department, but was not convinced that the population and needs of Fort Lauderdale should be compared with the needs of Sunrise or Los Angeles. He was also not convinced that the proposed construction of the stations was appropriate because of future expansion needs. He was also unsure that the “private” station design was needed to accommodate personnel. He wished to entertain the idea of sharing recreation and fire services. Commissioner Moore wanted to determine if the equipment that is seldom used could be upgraded instead of replaced. He had been shocked to find that fire stations should be “thrown away” after 40 years.

Commissioner Moore was most bothered by was the lack of diversity recruitment. He felt the public would need to be shown that every opportunity had been given to employment diversity. He asked Chief Latin for a breakdown of new hires and promotions in the past 24 months by gender and race. He felt that the staff lacked diversity and the public needed to feel that the department represented them.

Commissioner Moore was not sure about the right square footage requirements, but wanted to be exact about construction costs. He felt the Commission should take amore active role in the National League of Cities position in regard to domestic preparedness. He feared that federal money may never reach a municipal entity; most of the money seemed to be designated for state and regional use. He felt that the County should be approached to provide money to fund HazMat apparatus because Fort Lauderdale was providing a regional service.

Chief Latin stated that under the regional concept, the City would buy all the HazMat equipment and provide training, and get \$500,000 for it. Commissioner Hutchinson asked Chief Latin how much it cost Fort Lauderdale to get the \$500,000; Chief Latin replied they just needed to keep doing what they are already doing. Commissioner Hutchinson thought it was costing \$3,000,000 to get the \$500,000. Commissioner Moore felt they needed to examine the cost of funding the HazMat program. The City Manager advised that a HazMat team was a necessity, and if the funding were to go away, Fort Lauderdale should still have a HazMat team.

Commissioner Smith felt they were in agreement that public safety was a priority, but they did not want to be wasteful and should continue to find ways to offset costs annually. Commissioner Moore stated that this is not the way things have happened. There used to be reserves in the budget for the Fire and Police Departments, but that was not happening now and the void needed to be filled.

Mr. Johnson stated that the gender and race breakdowns would be provided. Chief Latin stated that the reason for putting a recruitment unit in place was to ensure diversity. The current class was 20% black, 8% female, and 12% Hispanic. The goal was to get beyond 11.2 % for blacks. Commissioner Moore wanted to see this take place city-wide.

Mr. Johnson noted that a prototype station had been designed years ago that should be evaluated to see if it is still a useful design. Mayor Naugle noted the unique needs of Fort Lauderdale due to bridges, railroads and water, and care should be taken to design buildings that would not become obsolete in 10-12 years. Commissioner Hutchinson advised that once stations 2 and 8 move, every station servicing the area south of the river would be on the left side of the tracks, so a station should be built on Andrews to service those areas.

Discussion on Police operations continued from the October 29, 2002 State of the Police Department City Commission Workshop

Commissioner Smith wished to discuss decentralization of the Police Department. He explained Little Rock, Arkansas's N.E.S.T.s program -- Neighborhood Extension Services Teams -- which comprise small precincts throughout the city offering certain services, e.g., accepting water bill payments and issuing simple building permits. Chief of Police Bruce G. Roberts noted that he had discussed co-location of Police and Fire Stations. The negative side was the inability to be flexible in the future when services were needed in other areas. He felt that Fort Lauderdale was not large enough to warrant this approach; it would not be cost effective and would be cumbersome in regard to accomplishing the City's desired goals. He stated that hybrids had been suggested for certain areas but care should be taken concerning their placement so flexibility and efficiency would not be compromised.

Mayor Naugle stated that this had been done at the Airport facility. Chief Roberts felt that in the current climate with terrorism an issue, it made sense to have a shared facility and shared training. Commissioner Smith felt that the key was to get officers to locations as quickly as possible. Chief Roberts felt that the Police Department had been "making do" at its current location for 10 – 15 years and needed to move out.

Mayor Naugle stated that the 7th Avenue location could be part of the public safety program. Commissioner Katz asked if this could be part of the public safety bond and the Mayor answered yes. She asked if it would be possible to increase the current three police districts to four; she

wondered if this would be cost-efficient. Chief Roberts felt that depending on how annexation went, a fourth district might need to be created, but at the present time the creation of a fourth district would require more personnel, which made the costs and administrative needs prohibitive.

Commissioner Katz asked Chief Roberts about a Police Master Plan for the future. Chief Roberts stated that a preliminary assessment had been done 18 months ago. The original needs assessment of \$50 million only included the Police facility; it did not include redoing the jail, which would add approximately \$3 million. They also needed to work with the county to relocate the communications center. Commissioner Katz asked if the present property had been sold and if that money could be used for a new site. Chief Roberts replied that this had not been done yet, but would be accomplished at the next assessment.

Commissioner Smith felt it would be efficient for all brass, detectives, forensics and special units to be in one building shared with City management. He felt a comprehensive plan for public safety that pointed out the tremendous benefits would sell much better. Mayor Naugle felt this was a good idea and should be discussed at the second meeting in January.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

NOTE: A MECHANICAL RECORDING HAS BEEN MADE OF THE FOREGOING PROCEEDINGS, OF WHICH THESE MINUTES ARE A PART, AND IS ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS.